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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS.

THE LATE REV. DAVID ROWLAND,
SECRETARY TO THE CAMBRIAN SOCIETY IN DYFED *.

MR. ROWLAND was the youngest of four children, his parents having two sons and a daughter besides himself, and drew his natal breath at Ffoesyffin, in the parish of Llenddewibrefi, Cardiganshire, in August, 1783. His father followed the trade of a glover, which being an occupation of a humble kind in that district, he was not in affluent circumstances; his parents were however highly respectable, and much esteemed by their neighbours for their virtues and superior information.

The subject of this memoir was, at the age of five years, sent to a little school in the neighbourhood, where, in the space of three months, he proceeded as far as the Latin Grammar, a progress unusual at that place, and deemed very surprising. This flattering circumstance gave his parents room to indulge the fond hope of one day seeing their son become eminent as a scholar, and the strong partiality, which he continued to manifest for his books, served to increase this hope every day.

So ardent was his attachment to learning during his tender years, that, when the young people of the neighbourhood were in the habit of spending their long winter nights with his parents, in their workshop, on account of their interesting conversation, and agreeable society, with respect to himself, his books were constantly in his hands; and, so intense was his application, and so abstracted his mind, that, however amusing the tales related, or interesting the subjects of conversation, they did not divert his mind from his favourite pursuits. If asked, as he frequently was, what matter had been discussed by the company, or what incidents had occurred during the time they were together, he could not give an answer, being as insensible of every thing said or done, as if he had been in another apartment.

He continued thus to proceed with increasing ardour and diligence, until he arrived at the age of fourteen years, when, re-

* Such of the readers of the CAMBRO-BRITON, as were acquainted with this lamented individual, must necessarily feel indebted to the gentleman, by whom the Editor has been favoured with these interesting notices of his life, and which, it may be proper to mention, will be completed in three numbers. The Editor begs also thus publicly to express his own thanks for the very acceptable contribution.—ED.

flecting on his father's pecuniary inability to afford him the education which he wished for, and to which he aspired, he determined to lose no time in making some exertion himself towards attaining it. And, as no employment appeared so likely to afford him the double advantage of easing his parents of a portion of their burden, and also of gratifying his natural propensity for books as keeping a school, he resolved on undertaking the office. In pursuance, therefore, of this laudable resolution, he taught young persons, first at Tregaron, and afterwards at Llangeitho, in his native county; from whence he removed to Llanllawddog, and lastly to Pencadair, in the county of Carmarthen, at each of which places he discharged the humble function of a country schoolmaster with no small benefit to his scholars, and with satisfaction to their parents.

Having at the last mentioned place become acquainted with some families professing the religious tenets of the Independents, they induced him to join their congregation in public worship, and, admiring his talents and pious demeanour, advised him to become a Minister of the Gospel among persons of their principles, and recommended him to go to the Academy at Carmarthen to obtain the necessary qualifications. When at this place, he gladly availed himself of the opportunities for improvement which it afforded, and proceeded in his studies with great ardour and diligence. One of the young students, however, having in his hearing maintained doctrines contrary to those, which he professed to believe, and to what he deemed essential to Christianity, the circumstance in the first instance much shocked his feelings, and ultimately caused him to leave the seminary.

Being returned home, and still desirous of becoming a minister on the principles, which he professed, it was his intention to wait until an opportunity should offer for his introduction to some other academy for completing his studies. His thirst for knowledge however would not permit him to remain idle, without availing himself of such means as Providence placed within his reach; and, accordingly, he went for improvement in classical literature to Ystradmeiric Grammar School, which was but a few miles distant from where he resided. At this period he was about eighteen years of age, and such were his application and the progress he made in his studies, that he became the delight of his master, and gained the esteem and regard of his school-fellows. During his first year at this seminary his religious sentiments underwent a considerable change, and he became as

firmly attached to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, as he had been heretofore to those of the Independent persuasion. Accordingly he became desirous of being a minister of our national church, and entered into a course of study in order to be prepared for his examination previous to his admission to the sacred office. In this preparation five years were taken up, and at length, in the year 1806, he received Holy Orders, and succeeded to the curacy of Llanfihangel y Croyddin, in Cardiganshire.

It should, however, be observed, that he had, during this period, to encounter the same pecuniary difficulties as he had heretofore. His relatives being unable to supply him with the means necessary for his support, he was obliged to undertake the education of young persons one part of the year, that he might with the profits be enabled to attend school himself during the remainder. But he not only attended to his classical and theological studies at this time, but likewise paid such attention to the Welsh language, as enabled him both to understand the ancient poets and compose poetical pieces himself. Accordingly, in the year 1807, when he was curate of Llanfihangel, above mentioned, his late master, the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Ystradmeiric, having occasion to translate an ancient and obscure Welsh poem into English, availed himself of Mr. Rowland's assistance, for which he returned a public acknowledgement and thanks *.

In the early part of the year 1808 Mr. Rowland removed from Llanfihangel y Croyddin, and became curate of Carno and Llanwnog in the county of Montgomery. An acquaintance of his, in a letter of introduction to a friend residing in the neighbourhood of those places, recommends him to his notice as a young man of sense, of professional talent, and true piety. While officiating in these parishes, he evinced the same zeal for the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants, and attention to his professional duties, as at the former, so as to gain the esteem and respect of all around him.

A communication having been made to the Lord Bishop of St. David's (Dr. Burgess) by "the Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," that a Missionary was wanted at St. John's, Newfoundland, in the room of the Rev. Mr. Harries, deceased, and, an inquiry being in consequence made, Mr. Row-

* See Williams's Dissertation on the Pelagian Heresy, p. 75.

land was introduced to the Bishop's notice by the Rev. J. Jenkins, Vicar of Kerry, as a proper person for the important situation ; and he was so pleased with him on the first interview, and so satisfied with the account transmitted to him of his regular conduct and professional ability, that he recommended him to the confidence of the Society, and an appointment to the mission was the consequence. On his attendance in London on the occasion, so handsomely was he thought of, that the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Sutton) graciously received him ; and, in order that he might procure proper comforts while at sea, and be received with greater respect by the inhabitants of St. John's from his arriving in the Governor's company, the Lord Bishop of Exeter (Dr. Pelham) waited on Admiral Sir John Duckworth, to request of him to convey Mr. Rowland in his ship, the Antelope, which was about to sail, and gave so favourable an account of him, that the Admiral was pleased not only to consent to take him, but also to promise that he should act as his chaplain during the passage.

The idea, however, of leaving his parishioners, his friends, acquaintance, and native country affected his spirits not a little when the time of his departure arrived, and made a much deeper impression on his mind than he had anticipated, so much so, that he had even thoughts at one time of declining the acceptance of the appointment, to which he had been recommended ; but, summoning additional resolution, and making a great effort, he at length set out, and, having performed a journey of 400 miles, and got on board the ship which was to convey him, he had the happiness of finding his health and spirits as good as ever, and of possessing confident hopes, that his strength was proportioned to the difficulties which he had to encounter.

On the 24th of June, 1810, the Antelope set sail, and reached St. John's in the evening of the 20th of July, when Mr. Rowland, in order to lose no time in undertaking the duties of his mission, obtained leave from the Admiral to land on the following day. His credentials having been perused by the churchwarden, and principal inhabitants, a copy of his appointment was entered in the church books, and he commenced his missionary labours by performing divine service on the Sunday following, when a numerous and respectable congregation attended. During his passage, the judicious manner, in which he conducted himself, and the mental ability displayed by him were such, that he gained the friendship of the Admiral, who behaved invariably kind to

him, retained him as his chaplain after he got on shore, and offered him a magistrate's commission.

Having undertaken his duties at the place of his destination with zeal and resolution, and attended to them with diligence and perseverance, he had the heartfelt satisfaction of finding, that his endeavours met with success, and, in a short time, of witnessing the church becoming too small for the congregation. In the autumn of 1811 the edifice was considerably enlarged, in order to make room for the poor, which, soon after his arrival, he had pointed out to the Governor as necessary; and of its utility Government were, on a representation, so convinced, that they supplied 250*l.* for the purpose. When the improvements were completed, which was in December 1812, the church had become a spacious building, 90 feet long by 48 wide, with four rows of seats below, and galleries all round, and in the body was a pew, with rising seats, sufficiently large to contain 60 persons, appropriated to the use of the poor, who availed themselves of it the first Sunday after it was opened, and it continued without being ever empty afterwards during divine service. As a proof that the church was not unnecessarily enlarged, nor Mr. Rowland unsuccessful in his labours, 23 new pews were sold in one day for upwards of 38*l.* each pew, and the whole of them might have been disposed of at the same rate, had not the remainder been reserved, at his request, to be let for an annual rent to such families as found it inconvenient to purchase, or were not likely to remain any length of time at the place.

[*To be continued.*] R.

TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

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PARISH OF LLAN-SILIN, IN THE COUNTY OF
DENBIGH.

[*Continued from the last Number.*]

§ 4. ROADS.—The by-roads of this parish, of many miles extent, as those of other parishes alike circumstanced, are extremely inconvenient. Two turnpike roads, leading from Oswestry to the village, are in moderate repair; and from thence they unite, and proceed to join, at Llan Gedwyn, the main road from Shrewsbury, through Knockin and Llan Gynog, to Bala, Dolgellau, &c.